



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

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TO: The Secretary

FROM: IO - Richard L. McCall

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Your Participation in the 35th UN General Assembly

The Setting

In recent years memoranda to Secretaries of State concerning the UN General Assembly have often begun by telling the Secretary that [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] there will be ample opportunities to advance US national interests. This year is no exception.

The UNGA is not unlike other large deliberative bodies. Conceived as a forum where diverse nations might consider together how best to preserve international stability and promote economic and social well being, [REDACTED]

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But, underlying this somewhat unsettling mix of activity is a salient fact of significance to the international community and to the United States: virtually every issue of political and economic importance on the international agenda will be dealt with at the UNGA this year. The body itself is the focus of diplomatic activity for much of the world, particularly for less powerful countries who are unable to project their interests effectively in other

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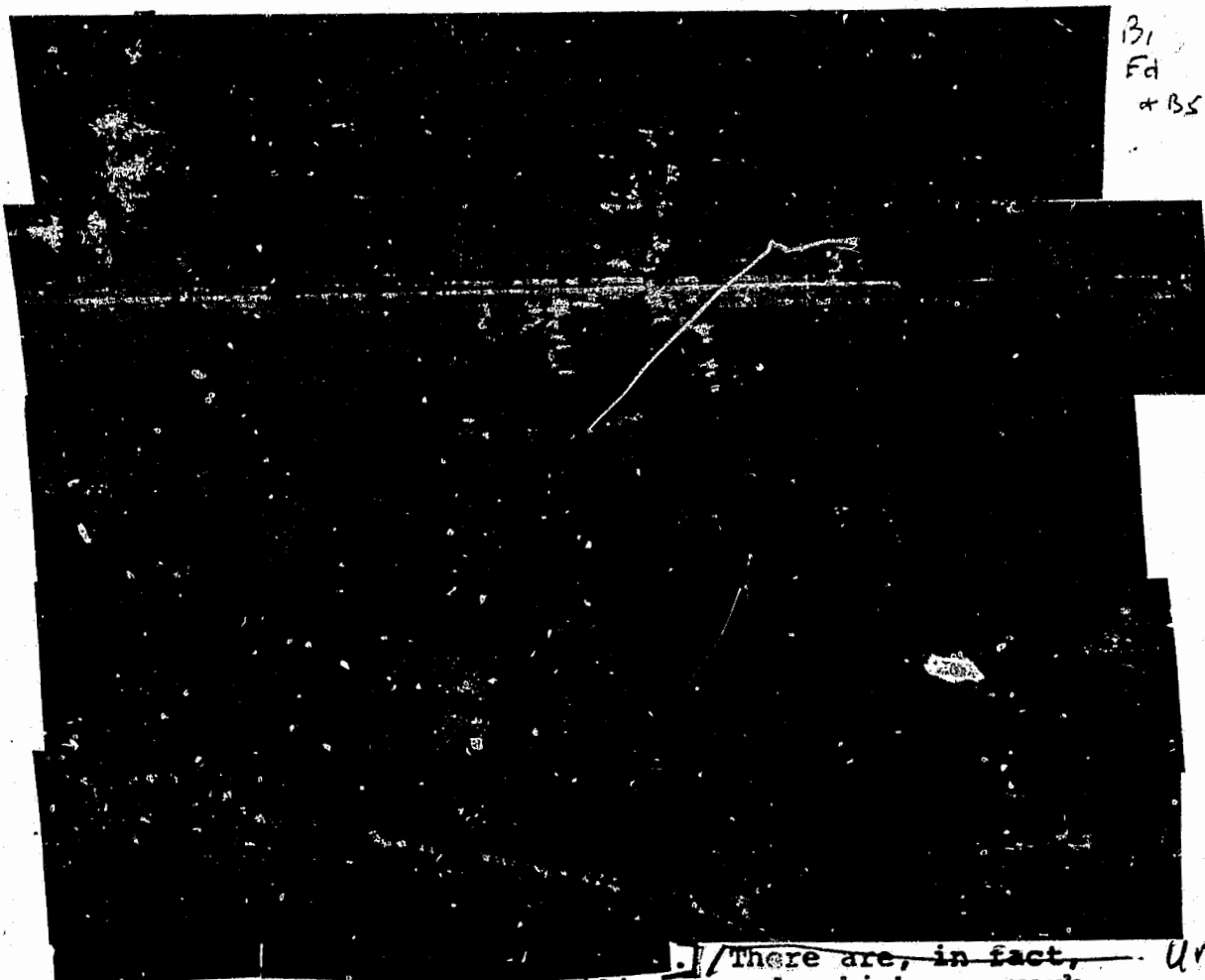
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ways. For better or worse, it is the only forum available to these countries in which to vent their frustrations. The US in particular, as a founder, leading supporter and the major financier of the institution and its sister agencies, is expected to approach its proceedings seriously and with a sense of resolve and responsibility. As the richest and most powerful nation, we often become the target of ire, but just as often we are looked to for leadership and guidance.



opportunities and countervailing trends which can work to our advantage. An important feature of the past year

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has been the movement in the UN--in contrast to the situation on the ground in Southwest and Southeast Asia--toward greater recognition of the need to strengthen adherence to international law and principle in the conduct of relations among states. We have seen this in the support for the ASEAN resolution on Kampuchea and the Islamic resolution on Afghanistan where violations of a neighboring country's sovereignty were thoroughly condemned by large majorities in the GA. We have also seen it in the nearly universal condemnation of Iran's act of hostage taking and indirectly, in Cuba's failure to secure a Security Council seat. Even on the politically charged Arab-Israel question, some seventy countries refused to vote in favor of a GA resolution last year which questioned the right of Egypt and Israel to conclude a treaty of peace. Last year's conclusion of an anti-hostage taking convention may find expression this year in a movement to establish international norms for the protection of diplomats and diplomatic establishments. These are all tendencies on which we can seek to build.

General Assembly Procedures

UNC?

Since this is your first General Assembly, it may be useful to give you a brief outline of how the Assembly operates. During the week before you arrive in New York, the GA will have already made some basic organizational and political decisions. The first act of outgoing GA President Salim of Tanzania will be to appoint the Credentials Committee. If last year's pattern repeats itself, the GA will be confronted with the immediate question of Kampuchean, and possibly, Afghan credentials. The nine-member Committee, which will be balanced geographically and will include the US, USSR and China, will meet to adopt a report recommending a position on any challenge. Once this report is adopted by the GA, the new President of the GA (probably Von Wechmar, the West German Permrep to the UN) will be elected, and he will appoint the officers of the GA-- the 32 Vice Presidents and the Chairman of the seven main Committees of the Whole (Disarmament, Special Political Affairs, Economic,

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During the two weeks you are in New York the GA will be engaged in formal general debate. The GA normally does not deal with agenda items during this period in which foreign leaders, most often foreign ministers, give statements of their governments' policies on international issues. You will be second speaker on the first day of the Assembly after Brazil.

After this two week period of general debate, the Assembly will settle down to Committee and plenary work; committees usually consider items before they go to the plenary for final action. Major statements are generally made in the committees unless the items involved are assigned directly to plenary. /

A consistent approach to the work of the Assembly is a prerequisite for effective US participation. This approach should be founded on a simple maxim: we should talk straight and vote in accordance with our policies. We will gain more from being firm and resolute than from attempting to obfuscate for fear of offending others or stimulating adverse domestic reaction. If in some cases we are unable to state a clear position, we should say nothing at all. Where others can carry the ball better

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and farther, we should offer quiet support. But we must also be prepared to get out and fight when our interests are on the line and only we can defend them.

Your presence in New York provides the opportunity for a round of high-level, personal diplomacy unmatched during the year. Your statement to the Assembly will set the tone for our participation. Your bilateral meetings and the events you host and attend will provide a central focus for our efforts. While you will wish to concentrate on bilateral issues in many of your discussions, there are several major multilateral, UN-related issues you can usefully raise; advocacy by you for our position on these issues will assist our efforts to gain broad support later in the session. When we have a better idea of your schedule we will work with the regional bureaus to determine which items you might best concentrate on in New York.

Major Issues

You will have separate background papers on significant issues we expect to arise at the GA. A brief outline of those most important to us follows:

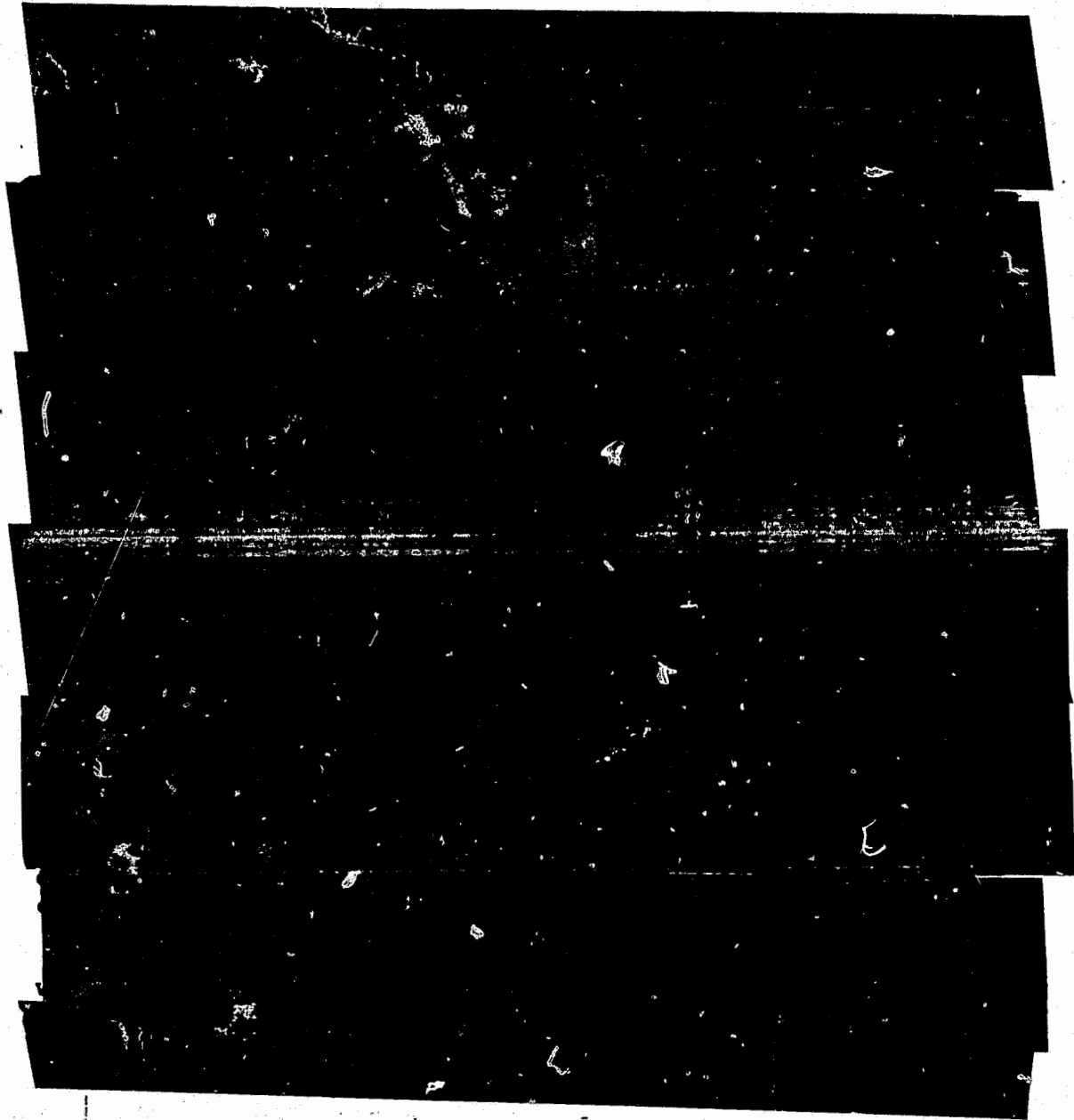


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